

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6991

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7079

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGEN, BL

SUBJECT: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR AMBASSADORS

REF: STATE 208527

1. FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES KEYED TO PARAGRAPHS OF REFTEL. WE STRONGLY URGE, IN ADDITION, THAT AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE BOEKER REVIEW AND CONCUR IN THE PROPOSED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER HIS ARRIVAL HERE.

2. EMBASSY NOT IN DISAGREEMENT WITH OBJECTIVE 1 (A); OBVIOUSLY WE SUPPORT IDEA OF ENCOURAGING BOLIVIAN RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, THERE SHOULD BE A STRONG CAUTION HERE AS TO WHAT "ENCOURAGE" MEANS. IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THAT US SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BECOME INVOLVED TO A DANGEROUS AND VERY POSSIBLY COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE DEGREE IN WHAT COULD BECOME A BOLIVIAN INTERNAL POLITICAL QUAGMIRE. WHILE PRESIDENT BANZER REMAINS IN FIRM CONTROL, HE IS DOING IT THROUGH AN ARTFUL BALANCING OF CONFLICTING POLITICAL PRESSURES, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH ARE A STRONG APPREHENSION AMONG THE MILITARY OVER A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE AND BOLIVIA'S HIGHLY FRACTIONED AND TRADITIONALLY VOLATILE POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM. THEREFORE, BANZER'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO RETURN THE COUNTRY TO DEMOCRACY WILL BE A DELICATE TASK. OUR POLICY HAS BEEN TO APPLAUD THE GOB'S OWN DECISION TO RETURN TO DEMOCRACY AND TO RECOGNIZE THAT IT SHOULD DO SO IN A  
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MANNER AND ON A TIMETABLE CONSISTENT WITH ITS OWN INTERNAL SITUATION. THIS POLICY WAS EXPRESSED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN DURING HIS VISIT HERE IN JUNE 1977 AND IN THE EMBASSY'S PARM SUBMISSION (LA PAZ 2320), PAGE 4). WE BELIEVE USG SHOULD NOT PRESS BANZER TO MOVE MORE RAPIDLY THAT HE IS PREPARED TO GO. THE EFFECT COULD BE DESTABILIZING AND WOULD MAKE US RESPONSIBLE IF THINGS WENT WRONG. WE SHOULD NOT

PRESUME TO UNDERSTAND AS WELL OR BETTER THAN HE THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC SITUATION. THE SAME CONSIDERATIONS WOULD BE TRUE OF EFFORTS TO INVOLVE OURSELVES IN "HOW" THE GOB MOVES TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE DEGREE OF CIVILIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS. CIVILIANS ARE ALREADY INVOLVED, IN ANY EVENT. ALL BUT ONE OF THE PRESIDENT'S MAJOR POLITICAL ADVISORS ARE CIVILIANS, AND MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY FIGURES HAVE AND ARE BEING CONSULTED. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, LEADERS OF THE MNR PARTY (WHICH WAS NO GREAT MARVEL WHEN IT CAME TO PROTECTING HUMAN AND POLITICAL RIGHTS WHEN IT WAS IN POWER), HAVE ENCOURAGED AND HOPED FOR EMBASSY AND USG PRESSURES ON THE GOB, AND WE CAN BE SURE THEY (AND OTHER MAJOR PARTIES) WOULD ATTEMPT TO TAKE FULL POLITICAL ADVANTAGE IF WE LET OURSELVES GET DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS. WE SUGGEST AMENDING A(1) TO STATE "ENCOURAGE THE GOB TO MAINTAIN OR ACCELERATE ITS TIMETABLE FOR A RETURN TO STABLE CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE NATION'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATIONS AND PROBLEMS."

3. AS FAR AS A(2) IS CONCERNED, WE NOTE THAT PRESIDENT BANZER RECENTLY VISITED VENEZUELA, HE IS ABOUT TO VISIT US, AND BOLIVIAN OFFICIALS HAVE FREQUENT INTERCHANGES WITH VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA, BOTH BILATERALLY AND VIA THE ANDEAN PACT. THERE IS A FAIRLY HIGH LEVEL OF EXCHANGE OF VISITS BETWEEN OURSELVES AND BOLIVIA ALREADY AND THIS SHOULD  
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CONTINUE AND PROBABLY INCREASE NATURALLY IF WE MANAGE TO MAINTAIN OUR PRESENT FRIENDLY RELATIONS.

4. B(1). THIS GOAL WILL HAVE TO BE IMPLEMENTED WITH DISCRETION, TACT AND DIPLOMACY. IF NOT CAREFULLY HANDLED, THERE IS DANGER OF AN ADVERSE GOB REACTION TO WHAT IT WILL CONSIDER PRINCIPALLY AN INTERNAL MATTER. (ALSO SEE PARA 7 BELOW).

5. B(2). WE FAIL TO SEE HOW B(2) CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AS WORDED WITHOUT INTERFERENCE IN BOLIVIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND CAUSING A GOB NEGATIVE REACTION. THE GOB DOES NOT NOW EXERCISE DIRECT CONTROL OR PRIOR CENSORSHIP OVER THE MEDIA NOR HAVE THERE BEEN ANY MAJOR INSTANCES OF GOB POWER USED AGAINST THE PRESS SINCE THE PRESS/MILITARY CONFRONTATION OF APRIL 1976 (OVER AMBASSADOR ZENTENO'S ASSASSINATION IN PARIS) FROM WHICH BOTH SIDES BACKED AWAY. WHILE WE CAN AND DO EXTOLL THE VIRTUES OF A FREE PRESS (THROUGH USIS, EMBASSY CONTACTS, ETC.) TO "CAUTION THE GOB" IMPLIES WE EXPECT IT TO TAKE SPECIFIC ACTIONS (WHICH GOB OFFICIALS WOULD TEND TO IGNORE SINCE THEY CLAIM THE PRESS IS FREE), OR THAT WE WOULD INTERVENE IN A SPECIFIC MATTER. WOULD IT

HAVE BEEN FRUITFUL FOR US TO HAVE TRIED TO TAKE A POSITION IN THE ZENTENO AFFAIR, FOR EXAMPLE? WE SUGGEST THIS BE WORDED "ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE A FREE PRESS IN BOLIVIA THROUGH APPROPRIATE USIS AND EMBASSY PROGRAMS AND ACTIONS."

6. WE AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH ITEMS B(3) AND (4).

7. B(5). WE THINK ANY USG FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS OR ACTIONS TO ENCOURAGE THE LIFTING OF POLITICAL AND LABOR UNION RESTRICTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GOB'S OWN EFFORTS TO RETURN TO A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. SUCH INITIATIVES, WE BELIEVE, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE NEW AMBASSADOR AFTER HIS ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION RATHER THAN BEING PART OF HIS INSTRUCTIONS AT THE OUTSET. IT MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT WE COULD TAKE SOME POSITIVE STEPS TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUCH A GOAL, AND TO A DEGREE WE ALREADY DO THROUGH AIFLD PROGRAMS, AND OUR GENERALIZED SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC FORMS. BUT A DIRECT DEMARCHE ON THIS TO THE GOB WOULD CERTAINLY BE CONSIDERED AN UNWARRANTED INTERVENTION IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. WE SUGGEST, FOR THE MOMENT, THAT B(5) BE WORDED, "SEEK AND DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES AND MEANS TO PERSUADE THE GOB TO LIFT CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL AND ORGANIZED LABOR ACTIVITY."

8. C. WE AGREE WITH NARCOTICS ITEMS.

9. D(1). WE SUGGEST INCLUDING AND THE END "AND TO CONSULTING ON GSA STOCKPILE SALES AND SALES POLICIES."

10. SUGGEST ITEM G(3) READ "ENCOURAGE GOB PLANS TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN DETENTIONS FACILITIES." THIS DESCRIBES THE SITUATION MORE ACCURATELY, SINCE THE GOB HAS SEVERAL SUCH PLANS.

11. WE CONCUR WITH OTHER ITEMS IN REFTEL. ABOVE REVIEWED BY CHARGE BEAL.  
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